

State Deputies Meeting Presentation June 2020

Script

Reyes

Slide #4

Thank you, Worthy Supreme Treasurer.

Brothers, it is good to be with you.

Slide #5

The Purpose of this presentation is to share with you some important information about the Evangelization and Faith Formation Division of Fraternal Mission. My goal is to tell you a bit about what we do as a division, offer some practical information that will be helpful as you exercise your leadership, and provide you with a few highlights from the recent months that testify to your great work.

Slide #6

Let me begin with a powerful line from the Supreme Knight. This comes from a talk he gave earlier in the year to a large gathering of men in Phoenix AZ. It was a big annual men's conference and the local Knights were key to putting the event on and many were there to hear him. At that gathering the Supreme Knight said:

“Today is a providential opportunity for each of us to decide what is our next step in achieving an ordered life in Christ. This is not a time for half-measures. There are no part time disciples.... It is all or nothing.”

In a way this captures the essence of the Evangelization and Faith Formation division of Fraternal Mission. Let me explain.

Slide #7

Vision

According to the Supreme Knight, the Church is facing a crisis. For example, many people are leaving the faith and the many in the rising generation of young people do not seem interested at all in the Church. And the Church is also facing yet another round of painful scandals. The Supreme Knight went on to explain that this crisis is rooted in a failure of evangelization – a failure to bear witness to the faith – in both word and action - in way that is convincing not only to the people we work with and go to Church with, but to our own children. In light of this – the

Supreme Knight has called the order to action. It is time, as our new video series puts it – to “step into the breach”. That is why the Supreme Knight formed a special division in Fraternal Mission to focus on strengthening our catholic life – that’s what formation is – and equipping us to present our faith effectively to the world in our words and in our actions. That’s what evangelization is.

Furthermore, as the Exemplification of Charity, Unity and Fraternity makes clear, this work of faith formation and evangelization starts in the home. In the Exemplification we read: “In a divided world, where many find it difficult to truly encounter God, Knights of Columbus families live their faith, fulfill their mission, and evangelize the world.”

What is the Domestic Church?

This is why the order has been so focused on what has been called the “Domestic Church” – that is our life as Catholic families. As St John Paul II explained, the phrase “domestic church” has been used to describe families since the beginning of Christianity.

The mission of this domestic church is to live the faith in such a vibrant and powerful way that it has a ripple effect that changes the world.

When a family - and by extension a council - prays together, goes to Mass weekly, frequents the Sacrament of Confession and serves its neighbors generously, it witnesses to the wider truth of the Gospel and the true meaning of our Faith in a *convincing way!*.

By strengthening the faith life of our “little churches” – our homes – we are also strengthening our councils, parishes and by extension the broader community. It has often been noted that the reason so many families are suffering today is because of the loss of faith. This is true. But it is also the case that the reason so many have lost the faith today is because of the breakdown of the family. Belief in Jesus Christ and the strength of the family go hand in hand.

Faith in Action

That is why the Building the Domestic Church initiative serves as the foundation for the relatively new (its 3 years old now) Faith in Action program model. This new model seeks to combine faith, growth in virtue, service and evangelization. Those councils that are thoroughly implementing Faith in Action are changing the world. They are fulfilling their mission in a powerful way.

So let me turn to some brief comments on the activities that help us accomplish this mission.

Activities

Programs

First, our programs. The Evangelization and Faith Formation division is responsible for all the programs. These are the tools for living out our mission.

Currently there are 32 programs divided into 4 categories: Faith, Family, Community and Life. Each program embodies our principles of Charity, Unity and Fraternity. As mentioned last year, Faith in Action is designed to provide brother Knights and their families with the opportunity to grow in their faith, engage the family in mission, serve their parish and community, defend the dignity of human life, and evangelize through witness and action.

In addition to our programs, our division also has responsibility for providing clear catechetical materials, prayer materials, and explanations of the faith to fellow members and to the wider community. We oversee the main tool for this - the Catholic Information Service (CIS).

For over 70 years, through various courses and today some 85 booklets covering almost every aspect of the Catholic Faith, CIS provides tools for the Knights of Columbus to grow in their own knowledge of the faith, and to help their families, their councils, their parishes, and others do the same.

Let me conclude this brief overview by introducing, or re-introducing, the directors in our division. I want to make sure you can associate some names with this important work.

Our Team

- The Senior Director of the entire division is Damien O'Connor..
- The Director of all Faith in Action Programs is Sean Pott
- The Director of Formation Strategy is Kyle Montgomery
- The Director of Hispanic Experience is Luis Guevara

We are all at your service.

Slide #8

We bear witness

Let me begin this slide with a brief personal note. It has to do with the powerful witness of the Knights of Columbus to the broader Church. Before I came to work at the Supreme Office, I was serving as an executive at the national bishops conference – the USCCB – in Washington, DC. While working for the bishops, I was able to meet not only many bishops, but also countless priests and lay leaders from around the country and the world. I want to share two reflections from my encounters with them. First, many of them know of and respect the Knights. Some know a lot about what we do, but many have only a vague idea of the good work we do. But I can tell you this, when they come to know all that we are doing – they are impressed. I can't remember the number of times I heard a comment like: "Really, the Knights do all that!" Brothers, our work is impressive – and we need to make it better known. Not for our sake, but for the sake of the Church. We are a beacon of light for Catholics – not by our own merits, of course, but by God's grace. My second observation is this – the Supreme Knight is spot on, the Church needs the witness of the Knights more than ever. We are facing very serious challenges in the Church and we have a special role to play in addressing them. I know it, because I've had a front row seat to church affairs in the US and outside of it. I am personally honored to serve shoulder to shoulder with you, brothers. I can't think of more important work to do.

Love of God and neighbor

At the heart of what the Church needs from us is a faithful, powerful, and courageous witness to the love of God and love of neighbor. This, of course, is not new to us. It is what we have been from the beginning – no matter the circumstances or challenges. The more people see our faith in action – and the more men who join us in it! – the more effective is our witness to the truth that God is love, that he made us in love, and that he calls us live out that love in service to our neighbor. Our Leave No Neighbor Behind Initiative – which is doing so much for people right now in the midst of this crisis- is just a recent and very important national testimony to what we have been doing all along – living heroic charity. To people who don't know the Knights and want to know what we are about – this is my simple answer. It is the answer that Jesus gave to the first disciples – "Come and See". If you want to know who we are, come see what we do.

Importance of our programs

This why our programs are so important. They are the way in which we show people who we are.

This applies to the whole range of programs. We are more than any one of them. This is why it is important that councils organize a comprehensive schedule of programs for the fraternal year – to show the many facets and the extent of our love of God and neighbor.

Let us not underestimate the importance of our programs. In many ways, they define who we are – and they certainly show the world who we are.

Slide #9

Faith in Action Programs

Let me turn to some more practical thoughts on our programs. This fraternal year begins the third full year of our Faith in Action program model. Council adoption and integration of these programs into council life is key for overall council health, success and the growth of the Order.

Tools to Succeed

I would like to share with you four areas that will be crucial for achieving success through your programs this fraternal year. These are: Prayer, Leadership, Planning and Reporting

Prayer

Our work depends on God. It is that simple. So prayer must be how we begin and end all council activities. Through prayer, we place our initiatives into the hands of Mary our Mother and seek to align our priorities with the divine will of the Father. It is the starting and ending point of all that we do.

Slide #10

Leadership

Choose the right person for the job

Another key consideration for success is leadership. That means having the right man for the job. As we prepare to appoint new program leaders or continue with current ones, we should identify men who are faithful and lead by example, who are team players and who are able to communicate and delegate well. We also need men who are passionate about either Faith, Family, Community or Life. And we need men who can pass that passion on to others. The more engaging and

powerful our programs are, the more men will want to step up and take a leadership role in them. In the long run that means better leaders all around.

Provide role clarity

Once appointed to their position, it is vital that men understand their roles. They need to understand what is expected of them and how to succeed. To that end we are providing role descriptions for each Faith in Action program position. These are one-page resources available online in the For Members – Council Leader resources webpage. This role clarification will also help with delegating responsibilities. Delegation enables leaders to achieve greater success than they would on their own. It also encourages more Knights to be involved with the planning and running of any given program or event. This is where we find future leaders as well.

Support

At any point throughout the fraternal year leaders may have questions and need additional support in order to run their programs well. We have many resources and best practices, but in order to make these available we need good communication. So we are also providing another online resource, “Program Team Communication Channels” that will be available on the For Members – Council Leader resources webpage.

Slide #11

In addition to leadership, planning is also very important for success.

Communicate with your pastor

The first step in planning any council program or event should be communicating with your pastor. This communication about the programs the council offers for the parish and community is extremely important for success. This is such an important topic I will run through one of our resources for this in just a moment.

Intentionally select programs

But first lets consider how we choose our programs. Intentionality is very important for program success. It includes getting to know the priorities of the pastor, but it also means identifying the purpose behind each program and event that a council holds. The “why”. This year our Regional Training Directors will be offering a training titled “You Are Your Programs.” It is currently under development and will be ready this coming fraternal year. It will serve as an

examination and assessment of a council's health by reviewing its program offerings. It will also provide concrete next steps based on many successful models that will improve programs and strengthen councils. And strong programs and healthy councils means more members. The better we are, the more men will want to join us.

Plan in advance/Consider all stakeholders

It is also helpful to get an early start on planning. Taking the time to adequately plan will allow for a more timely communication that will increase involvement and drive program engagement. Planning in advance enables the council to consider all stakeholders in the parish and the community. Communication with the other ministries in the parish that includes among other things sharing goals and comparing calendars will give these stakeholders a reason to encourage parish and community involvement in our efforts. They become advocates, in many cases unofficial recruiters for us.

Slide #12

Reporting

Once a council has successfully planned and hosted a program, it is important that it is reported and shared. Reporting programs helps monitor success and provides valuable feedback to the Programs Team. Councils are encouraged to report their programmatic activity online and in real-time. To that end, we have the online Fraternal Program Report Form – the “ten seven eighty four” (10784) - which is available on the Faith in Action website Resources page. The Programs Team has condensed multiple forms into this one online form and will continue to improve its functionality over this next fraternal year. Our goal is to keep making things simpler. In addition, each program event requires its own submission, and the council will receive a receipt documenting their program data. These can then be used to better populate your Annual Survey of Fraternal Activity – the “seventeen twenty eight” (1728). Refund programs such as RSVP and Food for Families still require their own unique forms which can also be found online on the Faith in Action website Resources page.

Online Reporting

I would like to emphasize the importance of online reporting. When programs are reported online and frequently, we are better able to assess council and program health throughout the Order, in real-time. This data enables us to better direct our

efforts in support of the field. It also helps us tell the story of the Knights globally – with real time data on our work especially in moments of great need.

With online reporting we can also provide every jurisdiction with quarterly or even monthly program reports.

But these reports are only as accurate and meaningful as the amount of data submitted in a given period of time. So it is important that we all work together to get this information.

If real-time reporting is not realistic for a council, we encourage regular monthly reporting, and quarterly at the very least. As leaders, let me thank you for championing this shift to online regular reporting. It does make a difference.

Slide #13

Columbian Award

I would like to now shift to a related topic – the Columbian Award. We have been working hard to simplify the process through which councils earn it.

Let me summarize some of the changes.

In the upcoming Fraternal Year, the simplified process to earn the Columbian award is the following:

- First, you still need 16 credits but how you get them has been simplified.
 - This can *now* be done by:
 - Completing *any* programs a council chooses [in each category of Faith, Family, Community & Life] to earn the *4 credits for that category*
 - We have also upped the number of “featured” programs to increase the opportunities for gaining credits. Now there are **(3)** featured programs in each category. And these programs are worth (2) credits each.
 - Simply put:
 - A council can earn 16 credits total, as long as they perform enough programs in each category to earn 4 credits.

- For example, if a council chooses to complete (2) featured programs in each of the Faith in Action categories, they will have earned 16 credits. It is that simple.

In addition, we will also no longer have any “required” programs. Councils will now have the freedom to choose whichever programs in each category work best for them as long as they earn (4) credits.

This new format will be made available to all State and local councils very soon. I think you will find that these changes make the achievement of the Columbian Award simpler, but just as rewarding.

Slide #14

We are here to help

We are dedicated to the success of every council in every jurisdiction. To support the programmatic efforts of the Order, the Fraternal Mission’s Programs Team is constantly seeking to improve processes and provide necessary support. Many resources have been simplified and updated on the kofc.org/fiaresources page. Some of these include an updated Faith in Action Guidebook, simplified program guide sheets, the Faith in Action website (now available in English, Spanish and French), program director role descriptions and a communication channels resource.

The efforts and resources from Supreme can only improve if council leaders, particularly Program Directors and the Faith in Action Programs Teams, continue providing feedback and suggestions. Your feedback makes a difference and will continue to help shape the direction and support from Fraternal Mission’s Programs Team throughout the year.

Slide #15

How to Communicate with Your Pastor

One of the things that has emerged from the last few years of the Faith in Action program is the importance of having good communication with a pastor. This is so important to success that I want to take a few minutes to single out some of the insights from our “How to Communicate with Your Pastor” resource. It too is available on line if you want to walk through in more detail.

Here is a key insight we have gained over the years: as a general rule, Councils that have a strong relationship with their pastors and strive to serve his vision, are often the healthiest and most successful councils.

That said, there are effective ways to communicate with a pastor, and, frankly, ways that actually make things worse.

The most important thing to remember is that the council is at its best when it is in alignment with the pastor. The pastor is shepherding the whole parish. To the extent that we can work with the pastor's vision and serve it, we will be healthier, and more effective and in the end we will draw more members.

Here are (6) simple steps that if followed will help councils.

- 1. Request a meeting with the pastor in order to ask how the council may better serve him and the parish. It may be wise to have nothing else on your agenda. The pastor will really appreciate the gesture.
- 2 When you meet with you pastor to discuss a new idea or project, understand that he is likely thinking, "How much is this going to cost me and how much work is this going to create for me?"
 - Make sure that those two concerns are alleviated in your presentation and then you will have a pastor who is much more engaged in the conversation.
- 3 As we all know, each council creates a calendar for the Fraternal Year. Prior to creating this calendar, ask your pastor if you may see the parish's calendar for upcoming year first.
 - Once you have the important dates and events of the parish, incorporate them into your council's calendar as you develop it.

Slide #16

How to Communicate with Your Pastor (continued)

- 4 Before you talk to your pastor, be sure to understand the Faith in Action programs well. You will notice that many of the programs are ministries often seen in parishes. So, when meeting with your pastor to discuss implementing some of the programs in the parish, start with those FIA programs that already align with his priorities for the parish. Quite often, your parish's website or bulletin will indicate consistent priorities of your pastor.

- 5 Offer to serve on or help with the pastor's leadership team or parish council. This will show him that you are committed not only to what the knights are doing, but that you are also willing to help with the wider set of activities that he believes are essential to the parish.
- 6 Be "on call". That is, be the group in the parish that your pastor can depend on the most. There are often dozens of groups that exist within a parish but only one pastor. Even with the best of planning, last-minute issues come up that the pastor needs to deal with. He will really appreciate your flexibility and willingness to serve when unforeseen issues come up.

Slide #17

Series Overview

Before I conclude, I would like to just offer a few highlights on two of the most important recent initiatives of our department and also thank you for making them such a success so far.

First, I want to offer an update on our *Into the Breach* video series. This is our latest video series on men's spirituality and in a way, it embodies everything we have been talking about. It issues a call to men to take a leadership role in addressing the breaches we face as a church and a society today – people leaving the faith, the defection of our youth, family breakdown, and the loss of confidence in God more generally - to mention a few. And it offers guidance.

The series has been quite successful since we launched it on Ash Wednesday when we made all the videos available free of charge at kofc.org/intothebreach. To date we have had over 400 thousand views.

I think there are number of reasons for this success. First, the videos are powerful. They were produced at the highest level of quality with music and images that are top notch. Second, each video tells the story of a specific man – a man who everyone can relate to. These are real stories of struggle and victory. There are few things more inspiring than watching another man overcome a challenge that all of us face. Finally, the videos feature some of the foremost voices of Catholic men's spirituality in the country. So, there is real insight and very practical advice in each video. They give you things to think about and to do.

Each video covers a specific topic, so they are easy to use as well. You do not have to watch them in any order – you can pick a topic of interest and dive into

that subject. The topics include: brotherhood, leadership, prayer, spiritual warfare family, and life among others.

Slide #18

Objectives

Program Launch

The *Into the Breach* video series will be launching as a official Faith in Action program in July 2020. Every council is asked to seriously consider offering this program. It is a major priority for the new Fraternal Year.

The program asks councils to form small groups to view and discuss the episodes of the series. And soon a set of very practical resources to help conduct the program will be available, including a detailed study guide.

Slide #19

Leave No Neighbor Behind

The other recent initiative I want to mention before closing is the Leave No Neighbor Behind program. Our work in this area has been so powerful that the White House is asking for regular updates on our activities. No one chooses a pandemic, but how we respond to it is a choice. Brothers, I have the privilege of hearing all the stories and seeing the data from around the world about our work. It is nothing short of awesome. At some point we will summarize the Order's efforts and share them with members, but in the meantime let me simply echo the Supreme Knight's sentiments and say thank you. And please, keep it up. The suffering is still grave and there is more we can do. Right now, this is one of greatest opportunities we have to fulfill our mission of bearing witness to the love of God, through love of neighbor.

Slide #20

And this takes me back to where we started this presentation – with a consideration of our mission. We are called, as Catholics and as Knights, to be witnesses. The Supreme Knight has set the vision for this witness – it starts with the family and ends with the evangelization of the world. In the Exemplification of Charity, Unity and Fraternity we commit to it. Our job as the Evangelization and Faith Formation team, quite simply, is to do everything we can to help you fulfill that commitment. If there is anything we can ever do, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Slide #21

Brothers, thank you for taking the time to listen to this presentation. And be assured of our continued prayers for all of you and the great work you do. *Vivat Jesus.*